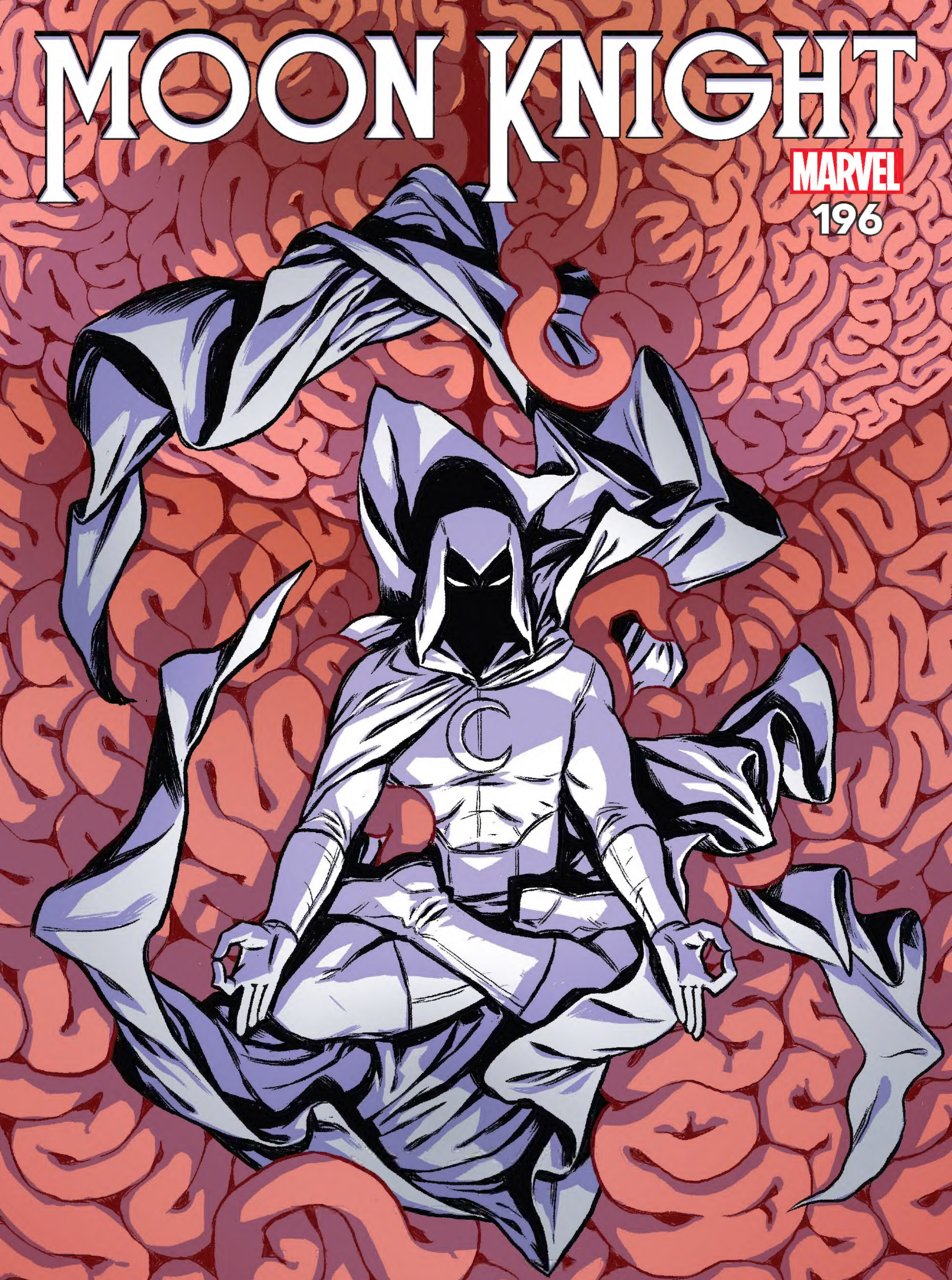
MOON KNIGHT

MARVEL

196



BEMIS (DAVIDSON (LOPES

Marc Spector. Steven Grant. Jake Lockley. Each a distinct personality of one man vying for control. Spector, the original personality, has asserted his dominance and fights to retain that control. But years ago, as a mercenary, Spector died in Egypt under a statue of the moon god **Khonshu.** In the shadow of the ancient deity, Marc returned to life. From then on, Marc took on a new aspect in honor of Khonshu, dedicating his second life to fighting crime as…

MOON KNIGHT

Marc Spector just wanted a quiet night out with his new family, but things rarely stay quiet around Moon Knight. An ambitious scientist attempted to get a group of misfits to combine body, mind, and soul, but his experiment went horribly wrong and created a mass of flesh and brains calling itself the Collective.

Moon Knight arrived on the scene and tried to fight it, but ended up being absorbed into the creature, finding all his personalities trapped within the shared mindspace… the Collective's unconscious!

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INSIDE THE COLLECTIVE HEADSPACE.

THIS WAY, GENTS.

WE'VE GOT INFINITE SPACE TO COVER AND NOT MUCH TIME TO DO IT IN.

DON'T JUDGE US BASED ON TY'S CORNER OF OUR BRAIN. EVERYONE'S GOT ROOM IN THEIR NOGGIN FOR SOME PIPING-HOT DIONYSIAN FIXATION.

I ADVISE YOU TO SHIELD YOUR EYES FOR BOTH YOUR OCULAR AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH.

JULIE'S BEGUN TO INCORPORATE SOME OF OUR LATEST HUMAN ACQUISITIONS INTO HER REALM OF THE ARTS...

HOPEFULLY IT'LL DO SOMETHING FOR HER TASTE.

YO, DAWG... LET'S, LIKE, BURN THIS WHOLE PLACE DOWN. C'MON. @%#$ IT.

YOU AND ME, HOMIE. I'VE GOT A GRENADE CONCEALED *WITHIN ME.*

YOU BRING THE BLOWTORCH.

YOU BRING THE BLOWTORCH! HAHA!

SORRY ABOUT THAT.

SELF-SABOTAGE CREW. ALWAYS BEST TO JUST IGNORE THE LIKES OF HIM.

AND THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING.

THE HUMAN MIND HAS AN INFINITE CAPACITY FOR ***DIVERSIFICATION.*** EACH NEW BRAIN WE ADD IS ANOTHER UNIVERSE WITHIN US.

SO IMAGINE THAT WE KEEP ADDING INFINITY UPON INFINITY EVERY TIME WE ABSORB SOMEONE...

DAVA

COM

JACK- BE

THAT'S A LOT OF PERSONALITIES TO DEAL WITH. WHAT YOU'VE GOT HERE IS AN ***EXCESS*** OF PERSONALITY.

YOU REALIZE IT'S TAKEN MY MAN MARC SPECTOR 30 YEARS TO DEAL WITH A ***HANDFUL*** OF IDENTITIES?

NO WONDER YOU'RE JUST ATTACKING RANDOM PEOPLE ON THE STREET. THIS PLACE IS OUT OF CONTROL.

CK.

THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN, MR. SPECTOR.

OR SHOULD I SAY... MR. KNIGHT.

UM, I HAVE A WHOLE SECRET-IDENTITY THING...

YEAH, AND YOU'RE FRIGGIN' DOING GREAT WITH IT THUS FAR.

I'M THE DE FACTO RULER OF THE COLLECTIVE, GIVEN THAT ITS IDEA WAS BORN OF MY THOUGHT PROCESS.

BUT I'M JUST ONE MAN WHO NEVER HAD MUCH TO SAY FOR HIMSELF OUTSIDE OF SCIENTIFIC AMBITION... WHICH IS OBVIOUSLY ADEQUATELY REPRESENTED HERE.

SOMEONE NEEDS TO KICK SOME BUTT AROUND HERE TO KEEP THINGS IN LINE.

HE IS POTENTIALLY CORRECT, MARC.

PERHAPS IF THE...*UNRULIER* ASPECTS OF THE COLLECTIVE'S PERSONALITY COULD BE POLICED...

THEN THE COLLECTIVE COULD ACTUALLY BECOME A REASONABLE BEING INSTEAD OF A RAMPAGING, PREDATORY BEHEMOTH.

HOW IS A NUTCASE LIKE *ME* SUPPOSED TO BRING STABILITY TO A CONSTANTLY EVOLVING MINDSCAPE?

I MEAN... I'M JUST ONE B-LEVEL SUPER HERO. I USE *MOON DARTS* TO FIGHT CROOKS.

MOON DARTS.

REMEMBER, HERE, IN THIS PLACE, YOU'RE NOT JUST A SUPER HERO.

YOU'RE THE SUM OF ALL YOUR THOUGHTS AND WHIMS.

THE SOUP THAT IS ALL YOU ARE.

NOT JUST MOON KNIGHT.

OH, BOY...

MOON *KNIGHTS.* EVERY YOU YOU'VE EVER DREAMED OF.

NOW, WHAT SAY WE PUT THEM TO WORK?

THE MOON KNIGHTS RESOLVE THE OEDIPAL COMPLEX.

TRUST ME, KID, *LET IT GO.*

THE MOON KNIGHTS CRACK DOWN ON THE COLLECTIVE'S ANGST QUOTIENT.

SEE, IT'S NOT RANDOM STRANGERS YOU WANT TO DISEMBOWEL, IT'S YOUR*SELF*...

#IFELTHE'D FOUNDMYLETTERS ANDREADEACHONEOUT-LOUD. YOU'RE SO RIIIIIGHT...

MOON KNIGHTS VS. FALSE MASCULINITY.

ALL RIGHT, NOW SAY IT!

YOU CAN DO IT, MAN!

FINE. THE STEVEN GRANTS LOOK REALLY GOOD IN A EUROPEAN SWIM BOTTOM!

ALSO, I *KIND OF LIKE THOR!*

WAR. MOON KNIGHTS VS. ALL SUICIDAL AND HOMICIDAL TENDENCIES.

THIS IS, HONESTLY, REALLY UPSETTING.

I HAVE TO SAY, I'M NOT USED TO KICKING SO MUCH TAIL ON A GRAND SCALE.

WITH THE MOON KNIGHTS' DIVERSE SKILL SETS, WE JUST WHUPPED HALF OF THE COLLECTIVE'S PROBLEMS' BUTTS IN LESS THAN A DAY.

THIS MUST BE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE AN X-MAN OR SOMETHING.

YO! MAURICE!

WE JUST SCHOOLED YOUR COLLECTIVE! I'M SURE YOUR GUYS' PHYSICAL AVATAR HAS TURNED OVER A NEW LEAF!

CONTROL ROOM

KKK!

I ♥ N

WELL.

YOU'D BEST TAKE A LOOK YOURSELF, THEN.

I ♥

- RAGE : 25% - FRUSTRATION : 25% .....
- SEXUAL FRUSTRATION : 40% - INNER PEACE : 10% .....

TO PUT IT MILDLY, IT LOOKS BAD.

DAMMIT!!!

GEEZ! TAKE IT EASY, FIRST-ACT HAPPY GILMORE!

AND WE'RE WONDERING WHERE ALL THAT RAGE IS COMING FROM.

WE NEED TO IDENTIFY THE *CORE* OF THE COLLECTIVE'S DYSFUNCTION RATHER THAN POKE HOLES IN IT ON A MICRO-SCALE.

HMMM... THE CORE...

101 WAYS TO BAKE A CAK

HUMPH. I HAVE *NO IDEA* WHERE YOU'RE HEADED WITH THIS.

BUT IF IT GOES AS WELL AS IT HAS SO FAR, PSHHHHH...

WAIT. YOU!

CONTR ROO

ALL THIS JUDGMENT AND MESSIAH COMPLEX NONSENSE--YOU'RE KIND OF A @$#%, HUH?

CONTROL ROOM

WHAT? I AM NOT.

YEEAH, BUT YOU *ARE* A TOTAL @$#%, THOUGH.

WHATEVER! I WON'T HAVE YOU TALKING TO ME LIKE THAT HERE IN *MY* COLLECTIVE.

BESIDES, IT'S NOT THE GENERAL SENTIMENT AROUND HERE.

ACTUALLY, HE'S KINDA RIGHT, MAURICE.

YOU ARE ONE. AND WE ALL THINK SO, TOO.

I SEE HOW IT IS, PETER.

JUST BECAUSE I HAVE SOME *SELF-WORTH*... I'M THE FRIGGIN' BAD GUY.

THE DOUCHEBAG. THE DICTATOR. EVEN WHEN IT'S MY *BLOOD* AND *SWEAT* AND, WELL, *PURE GENIUS* THAT MAKES THIS ENTITY FUNCTION.

HELL, IT WOULDN'T EVEN *EXIST WITHOUT ME!*

YOU THINK THE WORK YOU'VE DONE IS SO GREAT? IF IT WEREN'T FOR ME LOCKING AWAY THAT SENTIENT VIRUS THAT'S TRYING TO DRIVE THE COLLECTIVE INSANE, THINGS WOULD BE *WAY WORSE!*

I DID IT TO KEEP YOU SAFE! IT'S NOT LIKE *I'M* THE PROBLEM HERE!

UM, WAIT.

IS THAT TRUE?

IS WHAT TRUE?

...

THAT YOU CORDONED OFF A HIDDEN AREA OF THE COLLECTIVE THAT'S HOUSING A SENTIENT VIRUS? WHICH IMPLICATES THAT YOU'RE CRAZY FOR DOING SO AND PROBABLY HIDING SOMETHING TERRIBLE?

PSHHH. NO, OF COURSE NOT. IT WAS A JOKE.

DON'T YOU GUYS KNOW *I'M FUNNY?*

IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN EASY TO FIGURE OUT THE HEART OF THE COLLECTIVE'S PROBLEMS LIES IN *YOU.*

I MEAN, THE DOOR SAYS "CONTROL," FOR KHONSHU'S SAKE.

YOUR OBSESSION WITH BEING THE CENTER OF THIS WORLD IS MANIFESTING ITSELF PHYSICALLY.

IT'S, LIKE, AN INTERNAL MALFORMITY BUILT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DAMAGE AND IT'S DRIVING THE COLLECTIVE NUTS.

SO LET'S BRING OUT WHATEVER IS IN THERE AND *DEAL WITH IT.*

SKRNCH

CONTROL ROOM

AGH! GET OFF ME, YOU SWOLLEN GECKO!

DON'T OPEN THAT!

MAURICE MAURICE *PREPARE* MAURICE *TO* MAURICE *DIE* MAURICE *SPECTOR* MAURICE MAURICE.

MAURICE *KNEEL* MAURICE *BEFORE* MAURICE *MAURICE* MAURICE.

ONE MAN SHOULD NEVER CONTROL AN ENTIRE WORLD, MAURICE. AND NO CRAPPY ASPECT OF SOMEONE'S PERSONALITY SHOULD DEFINE THEM.

TRUST ME. I WOULD KNOW.

NOW WATCH US *SLAY.*

ALL RIGHT. YOUR WEIRD LITTLE REIGN IS OVER.

IT'S FASCISM OF THE MIND! GET JUNGIAN WITH US AND LET GO, MAURICE!

BUT...I JUST HATE *AND* LOVE MYSELF SO MUCH!

STEVE, I DON'T REALLY KNOW THE METAPHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS, BUT GIVEN THIS GUY SEEMS TO THINK HE'S WHAT'S HOLDING THIS ALL TOGETHER, I THINK IT MIGHT HELP TO JUST...WHACK HIM IN THE FACE.

GIVE HIM SOME PERSPECTIVE, YA KNOW?

YEAH, YOU COULD TOTALLY TRY THAT.

WELCOME TO *MY* COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS.

THE REAL WORLD.

WELL...

THAT WAS A ROUGH ONE.

I WONDER IF THE EFFECTS OF THE CHANGE MAURICE MADE TO HIS BODY WILL EVER COME BACK AROUND AGAIN?

CAN HE BE CONTAINED?

I DON'T KNOW, KHONSHU. BUT I'M GLAD WE'RE SAFE FROM HIS GOOFY CRAP FOR NOW.

IT REALLY GOES TO SHOW HOW SOMEONE'S HANG-UPS CAN GOVERN EVERYTHING ABOUT THEM.

CETRAINLY A LESSON WELL LEARNED, MARC. FOR YOU, FOR ME, FOR EVERYONE.

HE MAY BE A HORRIBLE GUY, BUT I HOPE SOME OF THE WORK WE MOON KNIGHTS PUT IN WITHIN THE COLLECTIVE'S MIND-STATE AFFECTED HIS WORLDVIEW.

I WOULDN'T WORRY, MARC.

I CAN ONLY IMAGINE THAT WE MADE QUITE THE IMPRESSION...

THE END?

MOON KNIGHT

Hello, Moonies!

First and foremost, big thanks to Paul Davidson for coming on board for this absolutely wild two-parter. We threw a lot of bonkers stuff at him, and these pages are so full of crazy life, we were thrilled to have him. I hope you all had even half as much fun reading these issues as I had seeing them come together.

Secondly, we got a lot of great feedback on Ty Templeton and Keiren Smith's stellar work on MOON KNIGHT #194. We've been incredibly fortunate to have such awesome art talent on this book. But let's hear what you all had to say!

MOON KNIGHT #194: masterful! Max's writing is beautiful and the artwork by Ty and Keiren was perfect to tell this story. I haven't read a story this well done in years. This tale is haunting and will stay with me for quite a while. I love the insight into some of what made Marc what he is today. It seems like Max has a nice grasp of this character's workings. I love how he added to Moon Knight's origin without having to retcon anything. His respect for MK's history doesn't go unnoticed. I hereby urge Marvel to assign Max Bemis the title Moon Knight Scribe For Life! All the hard work and quality storytelling you guys are doing is really appreciated by me. Great stuff.

-Randy Whitehair

Hey Randy, believe me, Max has enough story fodder in his head for old Moonie that he absolutely could be Moon Knight Scribe For Life! He's got a really deep love and appreciation for the character that is pretty apparent, particularly in a story like #194. I'm thrilled to hear what we're doing is working for you!

As a die-hard fan of Doug Moench's vision of Moon Knight, I have been upset with many of the writers who have steered my favorite character's fate through the years, finding very few to be worthy of the mantle. I especially hated the way MK's history and personality (as well as those of his side characters) have been warped and degenerated by those seeking to turn him into something else. I have been enjoying Bemis' run so far, but I was dreading #194 because I was afraid it would further mess with a character whose history has already been messed with so much. Imagine my surprise when I found a tale worthy of Moench himself. I could easily see this as having come from MK's very first series. Well done. I am assured that my favorite hero is in the right hands.

Anthony Regolino
Lancaster, PA

"Worthy of Moench himself." Boy oh boy, there's no better compliment for a MOON KNIGHT team than that! Thanks so much for writing in, Anthony! It's always tricky doing a story that dives so strongly into a character's background, but I thought that Max, Ty, and Kieren really knocked it out of the park. And the fact that it seems to have worked for the diehards and the new fans as well really means the world to us.

Dear MOON KNIGHT team,

First off, I just wanted to say that the thrill I got seeing you had answered my last letter at the end of issue #194 was something that I will always remember. Getting a spot in the back of an issue of my favorite character's series is something that's just so cool, so thanks! I'm also excited to hear that you also have an interest in Stained Glass Scarlet. Hope she makes it into the series somewhere down the line!

Now, I had a question for #194. Where is Marc's brother, Randall Spector, in all of this? I know that it is entirely plausible that he just didn't have relevance in the context of the issue, but I was surprised not to see him in the background or mentioned at some point.

Thanks again for all your work on the series.

Clark M.
Texas

Welcome back for letter #2, Clark! And thanks for the question. The long and short of it is we didn't really have a place for Randall in the narrative. There was a lot to do with introducing Ernst, as well

as Marc's relationship with his father and his possible mental issues. We felt nodding to them would potentially be more distracting than additive. So, sadly, no Randall, or Mrs. Spector, for that matter.

Dear MOON KNIGHTers,

I've just finished #194. And, after a few minutes to compose myself, I thought I'd drop you a quick line! I've been reading comics since '83 and this is my first letter. MOON KNIGHT has always been brilliant, always compelling, but Mr. Bemis' run has been unbelievable! #194 totally blotted out the rest of the world and by turns thrilled and horrified me! Now that's how ya flarkin' do it!!! I look forward to much, much more! (P.S. Becky Cloonan's cover was sublime!)

Regards,
Andy Beagle
Manchester, UK

WHOA! Andy, we're absolutely thrilled to be your first letter! That's huge! I like the way you say #194 blotted out the rest of the world; that's absolutely how I felt every time I read it, at every stage of production. It's a hell of an issue. And yeah, how about those Becky Cloonan covers, huh?! She's one of the best in the biz, her mastery of design and mood is so stellar, I knew she'd absolutely kill it on these covers, and she's nailed every one.

Hello MOON KNIGHT Team,

I'm going to start by saying Moon Knight is my favorite character in all of comics, and, while I haven't read all of his books, I still feel that I've read enough to argue that so far this run has not done the character justice.

I was really excited to see MK get a real nemesis, but I found the Sun King to be pretty boring in the long run. This run so far has also come to feel like MK Lite to me. I tend to find a grittier Moon Knight more enticing than this comparatively cheery and bright re-skin has been. And, while I'm airing my grievances, I'd like to note that even though I love the Mr. Knight persona, I'd really like to see Spector don the cape and cowl more often.

However, after all of that, I gotta say that issue #194 has gotten me excited again. I love that it revisits Marc's Jewish roots and gives us a solid starting point to see where Moon Knight really came from. I'm definitely looking forward to seeing how it all plays out.

Despite everything I may dislike about the current run, I do also want to say thank you for keeping my favorite character in the limelight.

-Ethan V

Hey Ethan, thanks for writing in and letting us know how you feel. I'm sorry the current run hasn't been doing it for you that much, but thanks for sticking with us, and it's great to hear that #194 has brought you back around some. Not to tip too much of our hand, but I think you might really dig where the next few issues are headed. I hope you'll come with us.

Greetings, Team KNIGHT. Just a quick note to tell you how much I'm enjoying this series. The first arc was incredible. Both the story and the art were first-rate. I am seriously going to miss Jacen Burrows' contributions on this book. Thanks for creating a comic that honors what has come before, builds upon what we thought we knew and adds something really interesting to our hero's story. I am looking forward to seeing where Marc goes from here. Keep up the great work.

Mark Pearson
San Francisco, CA

Thanks for the note, Mark! And hey, since you brought him up, good news! The next two issues will see the triumphant return of Jacen Burrows to our book! It's another wild couple of issues; I think you're really gonna dig them.

With that said, let's wrap up this round of letters. See you next month, when Jacen Burrows returns and brings with him a whole heap of trouble for Marc.

Stay Weird!
-Jake T.

NEXT ISSUE:

MOON KNIGHT #197

Keep sending us letters to MHEROES@MARVEL.COM and be sure to mark them "OK to print!"

ZONE